

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 18286

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR

JERUSALEM FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PEPR PGOV EG IS US
SUBJECT: MUSTAPHA KHALIL'S COMMENTS ON SADAT'S CURRENT
THINKING

SUMMARY: MUSTAPHA KHALIL, ASU SYG AND A MEMBER OF SADAT'S
NSC, SAYS THE PRESIDENT HAS CONCLUDED THERE IS NO CHANCE
OF REACHING AGREEMENT WITH BEGIN. SADAT BELIEVES EVEN
WEIZMAN HAS LET HIM DOWN AND IS FURIOUS ABOUT ISRAELI
PRESS LEAKS ON WHAT HE TOLD WEIZMAN AND ABOUT BEGIN
PUBLIC STATEMENT. KHALIL SAYS SADAT AND NSC (INCLUDING
GAMASY) HAVE AGREED THERE MIGHT BE ANOTHER ROUND OF TRI-
LATERAL TALKS, PROVIDED THEY ARE HELD IN A FRAMEWORK WHICH
OFFERS SOME PROSPECTS OF MOVEMENT. ANY SUCH MEETING WILL
NOT RPT NOT BE IN SINAI, SINCE THIS WOULD VIOLATE SADAT'S
COMMITMENT TO NUMAYRI. GAMASY WILL NOT ATTEND BUT WILL
SEND A DEPUTY. SADAT'S AGREEMENT TO ANOTHER MEETING COULD
BE GIVEN TO THE SECRETARY ON HIS UPCOMING VISIT, BUT MUCH
WILL DEPEND ON WHAT THE SECRETARY HAS TO SAY RE U.S.

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IDEAS. SADAT COUNTS UPON PRESIDENT CARTER TO HONOR
COMMITMENTS MADE TO HIM AT ASWAN AND CAMP DAVID AND IS
CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT HE CONSIDERS "WAVERING" ON PART OF USG
WITH RESPECT TO PREVIOUSLY ENUNCIATED POSITIONS, E.G.
"MINOR" BORDER RECTIFICATIONS, THE INADMISSIBILITY OF THE
ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY WAR, THE ILLEGALITY OF ISRAELI
SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK, ETC. KHALIL CLAIMS SAUDIS

TRIED HARD TO PERSUADE SADAT TO JETTISON HIS INITIATIVE, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT MADE IT CLEAR HE IS NOT YET READY TO DO SO. IN RESPONSE QUERY, I GAVE KHALIL OUR ESTIMATE THAT BEGIN'S POSITION IS SECURE AND THAT EGYPTIAN PUBLIC MEDIA ATTACKS ARE RALLYING MORE SUPPORT FOR THE ISRAELI PRIMIN. KHALIL MAY BE EXPECTED REPORT OUR CONVERSATION TO SADAT. END SUMMARY.

1. AT SOCIAL FUNCTION LAST EVENING, I HAD A LONG TALK WITH ASU SYG MUSTAPHA KHALIL. HE IS A MEMBER OF SADAT'S NSC AND WAS PRESENT AT THE TWO NSC MEETINGS WHICH HAD BEEN HELD IN PAST WEEK TO DISCUSS STATUS OF ME PEACE EFFORT. KHALIL'S COMMENTS FOLLOW:

2. SADAT HAS CONCLUDED THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE OF REACHING AGREEMENT WITH BEGIN. SADAT ALSO BELIEVES THAT EVEN WEIZMAN LET HIM DOWN BY TELLING OTHERS BESIDES BEGIN ABOUT SADAT'S IDEAS. THESE THEN APPEARED IN ISRAELI PUBLIC MEDIA AS ALLEGED NEW SADAT PROPOSAL AND CAUSED THE PRESIDENT GREAT EMBARRASSMENT. SADAT WAS ABSOLUTELY FURIOUS AND HIS CONVICTION THAT ISRAELIS CANNOT BE COUNTED UPON FOR FAIR PLAY WAS COMPOUNDED BY BEGIN'S STATEMENT ABOUT NOT GETTING ANYTHING FOR NOTHING. I TOLD HIM MY UNDERSTANDING THAT WEIZMAN HAD HAD NO CHOICE, BEGIN HAD ASKED HIM TO MEET FIRST WITH DAYAN AND THEN WITH ENTIRE CABINET TO BRIEF THEM ON HIS TALKS WITH SADAT. RESULT HAD REGRETTABLY BEEN A SECRET

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LEAK, WHICH PUBLICLY DISTORTED WHAT SADAT HAD SUGGESTED.

3. KHALIL THEN SAID THAT SADAT AND THE NSC HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO ANOTHER TRILATERAL MEETING PROVIDED IT TAKES PLACE IN A FRAMEWORK WHICH OFFERS SOME PROSPECTS OF MOVEMENT. TIMING AND VENUE WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT. ANY SUCH MEETING WILL NOT RPT NOT BE IN SINAI. REASON IS THAT SADAT WISHES TO HONOR HIS COMMITMENT TO NUMAYRI AND TO THE SAUDIS THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANOTHER MEETING WITH THE ISRAELIS IN EITHER EGYPT OR ISRAEL. NOR WILL GAMASY ATTEND ANY SUCH MEETING. INSTEAD, ONE OF GAMASY'S ASSISTANTS, M/G MAGDUB, HAS ALREADY BEEN DESIGNATED TO REPRESENT THE MILITARY SIDE. KHALIL CLAIMED THAT THIS LAST POINT HAS ALREADY BEEN CHECKED OUT WITH WEIZMAN, WHO HAD ALLEGEDLY EXPRESSED AGREEMENT. KHALIL WAS EVASIVE ON THE METHOD OF COMMUNICATION USED. KHALIL MADE A POINT OF SAYING THAT EVEN GAMASY HAD AGREED TO ANOTHER MEETING.

4. SADAT'S AGREEMENT TO ANOTHER MEETING, KHALIL SAID, COULD BE GIVEN TO THE SECRETARY ON HIS UPCOMING VISIT. BUT MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHAT THE SECRETARY HAS TO SAY IN THE NATURE OF U.S. IDEAS. SADAT, KHALIL SAID, CAN BE

COUNTED UPON TO HONOR ALL OF THE COMMITMENTS THAT HE HAS MADE TO PRESIDENT CARTER. IN TURN, HE COUNTS UPON THE UNITED STATES TO HONOR THE COMMITMENTS MADE TO HIM AT ASWAN AND CAMP DAVID. I TOLD KHALIL THAT THE SECRETARY IS NOT COMING OUT WITH ANY USG PROPOSAL IN HIS POCKET, BUT RATHER TO EXPLORE WITH THE PARTIES WHERE WE GO FROM HERE IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. KHALIL SAID HE NEVERTHELESS HOPED THAT AS A MINIMUM THE SECRETARY WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS OUR IDEAS. THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN RATHER UPSET BY WHAT ROY ATHERTON HAD MENTIONED TO KAMEL ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR THINKING.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, KHALIL NOTED, SADAT IS CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT HE CONSIDERS "WAVERING" ON THE PART OF THE USG.

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SADAT HAS SENSED THAT AN EFFORT IS UNDERWAY TO DILUTE

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EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

PREVIOUSLY ENUNCIATED USG POSITIONS. SPECIFICALLY, THERE SEEMS TO BE MOVEMENT AWAY FROM THE EARLIER ANNOUNCED POSITION OF PRESIDENT CARTER THAT BORDER RECTIFICATIONS SHOULD ONLY BE "MINOR" AND ON THE WEST BANK. WE SEEMED ALSO TO BE HEDGING ON THE APPLICABILITY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INADMISSIBILITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY WAR, WHICH KHALIL RECALLED AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG HAD INCLUDED

IN 242 IN ORDER TO OBTAIN EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT. HE ALSO NOTED THAT WE APPEAR NO LONGER TO BE DECLARING THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TO BE ILLEGAL. THESE PRINCIPLES, KHALIL EMPHASIZED, ARE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO THE EGYPTIANS AND SADAT NEEDS TO BE REASSURED THAT WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY AND WILL ACTIVELY SEEK TO OBTAIN THEIR ACCEPTANCE. ON THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE, KHALIL THOUGHT SADAT COULD ACCEPT A SITUATION IN WHICH THOSE PRESENTLY THERE ARE "FROZEN" AND NO NEW ONES CONSTRUCTED. I TOLD KHALIL THAT I HAD FREQUENTLY SOUGHT TO REASSURE SADAT THAT THE USG STANDS BY EVERYTHING PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE SECRETARY SAID TO SADAT IN ASWAN, CAMP DAVID AND WASHINGTON. KHALIL SAID HE KNEW THIS BUT INSISTED THAT SADAT HAS BECOME UNEASY ABOUT WHAT HE PERCEIVES AS VACILLATING SIGNALS FROM WASHINGTON.

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6. SADAT, KHALIL OBSERVED, IS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION WHEN DISCUSSING WEST BANK MATTERS. NEITHER KING HUSSEIN NOR THE PALESTINIANS HAVE GIVEN HIM ANY MANDATE TO DO SO. HENCE, HE MUST TREAD CAREFULLY IN INTERFERING IN WEST BANK SETTLEMENT.

7. ASKED ABOUT THE SAUDI POSITION, KHALIL SAID THAT THE SAUDIS HAD TRIED HARD TO PERSUADE SADAT THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO JETTISON HIS INITIATIVE. ALTHOUGH KHALIL HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN THE PRIVATE TALKS WITH PRINCE FAHD, SADAT HAD SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD THE NSC THAT PRINCE FAHD (ALONG WITH SAUD BIN FAYSAL) HAD PRESSED HARD TO PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT TO SHIFT COURSE. SADAT HAD ALSO RECEIVED A LETTER FROM KING KHALID SUGGESTING THE SAME THING. WHILE EGYPT CANNOT APPEAR TO BE STANDING IN THE WAY OF ARAB RECONCILIATION, SADAT HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT YET READY TO GIVE UP HIS PEACE INITIATIVE. HE PROMISED THE SAUDIS THAT HE WILL HONOR HIS COMMITMENT TO NUMAYRI TO HOLD NO MORE DIRECT MEETINGS IN EGYPT OR ISRAEL, BUT HE WANTED TO GIVE THE UNITED STATES MORE TIME TO SEE WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

8. KHALIL ASKED FOR OUR ESTIMATE OF BEGIN'S POSITION. I TOLD HIM THAT WE BELIEVE BEGIN'S POSITION IS SECURE AND NOTED THAT EGYPTIAN PUBLIC MEDIA ATTACKS ARE RALLYING EVEN THOSE WHO ARE DOUBTFUL ABOUT BEGIN'S POLICIES. I SAID I KNEW THAT SADAT RESPECTS PERES' VIEW AND HE MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING THAT PERES HAS RECENTLY TOLD US THE SAME THING. SCURRILOUS EGYPTIAN PUBLIC MEDIA ATTACKS ON BEGIN, ESPECIALLY IN THE STYLE OF ANIS MANSOUR'S WRITING, UNDERCUT THE VERY OBJECTIVE GOE IS TRYING TO ACHIEVE.

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9. COMMENT: KHALIL MAY BE EXPECTED TO REPORT OUR CON-
VERSATION TO SADAT. THE SIGNALS ARE COMING THROUGH
INCREASINGLY THAT SADAT IS NOT YET READY TO GIVE UP
HIS PEACE INITIATIVE, WOULD BE WILLING TO HAVE A NEW
ROUND OF FONMINS TALKS OUTSIDE OF EGYPT OR SINAI, BUT
THAT MUCH WILL DEPEND UPON THE KIND OF ASSURANCES
WE CAN GIVE HIM THAT WE ARE NOT WAVERING AND WILL IN FACT
WORK TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMITMENTS MADE TO SADAT AT ASWAN,
CAMP DAVID AND WASHINGTON. EILTS

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